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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Cuba: draft resolution

Special Committee decision of 9 June 2003 concerning Puerto Rico

The Special Committee,

Bearing in mind the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, as well as the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Considering that the decade of the 1990s was proclaimed by the General Assembly, in its resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, as the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and that by resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000, the General Assembly declared the period 2001-2010 the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism,

Bearing in mind the 22 resolutions and decisions adopted by the Special Committee on the question of Puerto Rico, contained in the reports of the Special Committee to the General Assembly,

Recalling that 25 July 2004 marks the one hundred and sixth anniversary of the intervention in Puerto Rico by the United States of America,

Also recalling the diverse initiatives taken by the political representatives of Puerto Rico and the United States in recent years, which have thus far failed to set in motion the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,

Stressing the need for the United States to lay the groundwork for the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Taking into account the measures adopted in 2003 by both Chambers of the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico recommending the convening of a Status Assembly of the people of Puerto Rico as part of the search for procedures that would make it possible to launch the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,

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Aware that Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, has been used for over 60 years by the United States Marines to carry out military exercises with negative consequences for the health of the population, the environment and the economic and social development of that Puerto Rican municipality,

Taking note with satisfaction of the decision adopted by the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the bombings and military exercises on Vieques Island from 1 May 2003,

Recognizing that this decision is the outcome of the prolonged process held during years of peaceful protests carried out by the people of Puerto Rico as well as the wide campaign of international solidarity, which has been appropriately reflected in the work and documents of the Special Committee,

Noting also the consensus existing in the people and the Government of Puerto Rico on the necessity of ensuring the return to the people of Puerto Rico of all the territory previously used in military exercises, as well as its decontamination,

Noting with satisfaction that as a consequence of the closure of the firing range on Vieques Island, inter alia, the Government of the United States of America decided to close and dismantle the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Ceiba,

Aware that the closure and dismantling of this military installation and the return of the occupied land to the people of Puerto Rico represents an extraordinary opportunity for the economic and social development of the eastern portion of Puerto Rico,

Recalling the release of several Puerto Rican political prisoners during the past few years,

Noting the consensus among the people of Puerto Rico in favour of the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners who are still serving sentences in United States prisons for cases related to the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence, and of those who are still in prison for reasons relating to the Vieques Island struggle for peace,

Noting that the final document of the Thirteenth Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Kuala Lumpur on 24 and 25 February 2003, reaffirms the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence on the basis of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and requests the Special Committee to continue actively pursuing the issue of Puerto Rico,

Having heard statements and testimonies representative of various viewpoints among the people of Puerto Rico and their social institutions,

Having considered the report of the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the implementation of the resolutions concerning Puerto Rico,[1]

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the applicability of the fundamental principles of that resolution to the question of Puerto Rico;

[1] A/AC.109/2004/L.3.

2. *Reiterates* that the Puerto Rican people constitute a Latin American and Caribbean nation that has its own unequivocal national identity;

3. *Calls upon* the Government of the United States of America to assume its responsibility to expedite a process that will allow the Puerto Rican people fully to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico;

4. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in recent years, progress has been achieved towards the implementation of a mechanism that would ensure the full participation of representatives of all viewpoints prevailing in Puerto Rico, such as the proposals to convene a Status Assembly of the people of Puerto Rico, based on the principle that any initiative for the solution of the political status of Puerto Rico should originate from the people of Puerto Rico;

5. *Reiterates* the hope that the General Assembly will give comprehensive consideration to the question of Puerto Rico in all its aspects;

6. *Urges* the Government of the United States, in line with the need to guarantee the Puerto Rican people their legitimate right to self determination and the protection of their human rights, to return the occupied land and installations on Vieques Island and at the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station to the people of Puerto Rico; respect fundamental human rights, such as the right to health and economic development; assume responsibility for and cover the costs of decontaminating the impact areas previously used in military exercises; and address the serious consequences to the health of the inhabitants of Vieques Island and the environmental degradation;

7. *Requests* the President of the United States of America to release all Puerto Rican political prisoners serving sentences in United States prisons for cases related to the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico and those serving sentences in United States prisons for cases related to the Vieques Island peace struggle;

8. *Notes with satisfaction* the report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee,[1] in compliance with its resolution of 9 June 2003;

9. *Requests* the Rapporteur to report to the Special Committee in 2005 on the implementation of the present resolution;

10. *Decides* to keep the question of Puerto Rico under continuous review.